

This Week in Congress

September 11, 2006

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." If you enjoy receiving this weekly email newsletter, please feel free to forward it on to others who may find it useful.

Five Years Later - Remembering September 11

On Tuesday September 11, 2001, the world as we knew it was changed forever. We watched as planes, hijacked by terrorists, crashed into the Pentagon, the World Trade Center towers and a Pennsylvania field, killing thousands. In one way or another, this terrorist attack affected everyone, and Kansans are no exception. It is important for us to remember the events of that day, to recall how Americans of all backgrounds united in strength and to demonstrate to our enemies that the United States will not be broken.

The first Freedom Walk was held last year in Washington, D.C., to remember those who died on 9-11 and honor past and present veterans that continue to fight for our freedom. With its success, Freedom Walk became a national event and took place this year in 117 cities across the country, including Hays on Sunday. The walk, led by color guard members, began at the National Guard Armory and ended at the Ellis County Courthouse. I spoke after a balloon launch and moment of silence. Patriotic songs were provided by Fort Hays State University music professor Terry Crull and the Hays High School elite choir. I applaud FHSU leaders Kiley Eisenhower and Katie Stucky, co-directors of Tigers In Service, for organizing this community ceremony.

Also, residents of Dodge City will gather today to erect a memorial in Liberty Garden Wright Park in remembrance of 9-11. My office was contacted by Ryan Carpenter with the City of Dodge City and asked to help acquire a stone from the rubble of the Pentagon, our nation's defense headquarters, which has since been rebuilt. My staff and I were honored to be of assistance. This unique piece of history brings to this community not only memories from that fateful day, but more importantly a hope that America will prevail.

We delivered the stone to a Patriot Guard Rider from Virginia to begin its long journey to Kansas. I am always proud to say that the Patriot Guard movement has its roots in the state of Kansas. These patriots are a blessing to our military men and women and their families, and we express our thanks to them for providing the transportation for the Pentagon stone across the country. I also commend the actions of the City of Dodge City. It is through much diligent work by caring citizens in Dodge City that this monument has come to fruition.

Korea Announces Resumption of Imports of U.S. Beef

This week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced Korea's decision to resume imports of U.S. boneless beef from cattle less than 30 months of age. Korea closed its market to U.S. beef in December 2003 when a single case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) was discovered in a Canadian-born dairy cow. Importing more than \$800 million worth of beef, Korea was one of the largest importers of U.S. beef prior to the closing of its border more than two years ago.

Congressional persistence and the efforts of USDA officials have paid off and the reopening of Korea's market to U.S. boneless beef means more good news for American producers. We are still in the beginning stages of regaining full access to important markets like Japan and Korea, but each step is key to the economic survival of Kansas ranchers. We will continue working to be the number one provider of beef products in homes around the world.

For the full text of my press release, [click here](#) .

Introducing Legislation to Help Rural Health Care Providers

I joined fellow members of the Rural Health Care Coalition in a press conference this week in Washington, D.C., to discuss the introduction of the Health Care Access and Rural Equity Act (H-CARE). This legislation helps rural health care providers address the challenges associated with delivering quality healthcare close to home.

Quality healthcare is not a luxury people in rural areas can do without - it is a necessity. Unfortunately, rural Americans face a unique combination of factors that create disparities in the health care system. From traveling hours to the nearest health care clinic to significant shortages of practitioners to inadequate reimbursement rates, access to care continues to be a challenge for those living in rural communities. The H-CARE Act addresses these and other challenges by recognizing the unique characteristics of health care delivery in rural areas and by assisting rural health care providers in their efforts to provide quality care to rural Americans.

This legislation will help Kansans and other rural residents have access to health care services by providing rural hospitals with the funding needed to keep their doors open.

Discussing U.S. and Cuba Trade Relations with Cuban Bureau Chief

This week, Chief Dogoberto Rodriguez Barrera of Cuba met with Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson of Missouri and me to discuss improving trade relations between the U.S. and Cuba. I requested the meeting in response to President Fidel Castro temporarily stepping down due to medical reasons, which may provide an opportunity for improved U.S.-Cuba relations.

We discussed the need to correct a decision by the U.S. Treasury Department that changed its interpretation of the cash in advance rule as it relates to U.S. agricultural goods. This change requires payments to be made before ships leave U.S. ports instead of the international standard of payment upon delivery. Our own government should not penalize our farmers and make sales to Cuba more difficult. Cuba must be able to count on the consistency of U.S. trading rules or they will get their products elsewhere. In June, I successfully offered an amendment to the House version of the annual funding bill for the Department of Treasury that would prohibit the department from enforcing their new rule.

Chief Barrera also informed us of Cuba's efforts to explore for oil and gas along their boundaries in the Gulf of Mexico. We discussed the possibility of cooperation between our two countries in this endeavor.

Attending K-State Landon Lecture and Beach Museum of Art Meeting

On Friday, I attended Kansas State University's first Landon Lecture of the 2006-2007 school year given by K-State alumnus and President of Shell Oil Company, John Hofmeister. Mr.

Hofmeister, who is also a 2006 K-State Department of Political Science fellow, spoke about the oil and gas industry and current energy prices. In addition to the tension in the Middle East, Mr. Hofmeister attributed the current oil prices to a lack of investments being made on future oil situations and the threat of demand exceeding supply. The world produces 85 million barrels of oil a day, but it uses more than 84 million barrels a day with no surplus capacity. Mr. Hofmeister also highlighted alternative forms of energy as the future for energy sources in the world, including liquefied natural gas, carbon-free coal, the sun, wind and hydrogen. He said hydrogen offers the most promising technological advancement in energy, but that conservation will ultimately be key for the security of energy for future generations, including using energy differently in the design of homes and vehicles.

K-State's Landon Lecture Series on Public Issues began in 1966 and is named after former Kansas Governor Alfred M. Landon. Each academic year, prominent public figures visit Manhattan and K-State to discuss current issues as part of the lecture series.

After the lecture, I attended a luncheon at the K-State Student Union with Landon Patrons and members of the Beach Museum of Art Board of Visitors. I then attended the Beach Museum of Art Board of Visitors meeting at the museum. Robba and I serve on the Board of Visitors. I enjoyed touring the renovated facilities and new building after the meeting with the others, including Lorne Render, director of the museum.

2006 Kansas State Fair - "It's a Wild Ride, Baby"

The Kansas State Fair kicked off on Friday in Hutchinson. More than 300,000 people are expected to attend the fair festivities this year at the newly renovated fairgrounds. Over the weekend, I attended several fair events, including the annual Kansas Farm Bureau leadership breakfast at Grand Prairie Hotel. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Saxby Chambliss from Georgia, hosted by Senator Pat Roberts, joined the group of agriculture leaders from across the state to talk about the upcoming farm bill. I also visited with the group about federal farm policy, as well as trade, rural development, rural health care and the importance of the next generation of farmers and ranchers. After the breakfast, I participated in an agriculture forum with Senators Pat Roberts, Sam Brownback and Saxby Chambliss. The forum was hosted by Greg Akagi and aired live on WIBW radio. Drought relief funds and the farm bill were the primary topics at the forum. Kansans used the opportunity to ask Senator Chambliss about specialty crop interests and how it will factor into the next farm bill.

I also stopped by a Kansas 25x'25 event where Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Adrian Polansky and Kansas State University professor Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh discussed the 25x'25 initiative. I am a sponsor of a Congressional resolution to derive 25 percent of the nation's total energy from renewable sources such as wind, solar, biomass and biogas by 2025.

On Saturday evening, Robba and I attended the Grand Drive and Gala to hand out awards to 4-H and FFA livestock winners. I always enjoy the chance to see our Kansas youth in action through programs like 4-H and FFA. These programs play an important role in the development of our young Kansans, as well as in our community and state.

I enjoyed visiting with Kansans throughout the weekend. The main topic people visited with me about was immigration and border security. I would also like to commend the Fair Board for their efforts in organizing another great year at the fair. Robba is a member of the board.

Members of my staff will continue to be on hand this week at my information booth in the Pride of Kansas Building. I look forward to returning to the fairgrounds next weekend.

Discussing the Fort Larned Historical Site at Hays Lions Club Meeting

I joined the Hays Lions Club for its weekly meeting at the Golden Ox Pavillion this week. I became a member of the Lions Club 30 years ago and have served as President of the club. I always enjoy spending time with the group. The program on Tuesday highlighted the restoration of the Old Commissary at Fort Larned National Historic Site. In 2004, I was able to secure federal funding to help complete the preservation of this 140-year-old building. The commissary was a storehouse used for perishable food items at Fort Larned in the 1800s. This post was instrumental in keeping the Santa Fe Trail open and in maintaining friendly relations with Plains Indians.

Visiting First State Bank in Junction City

This week, I visited First State Bank in Junction City to meet with the president of the bank, Steve Locke. Steve is the new Chairman of the Kansas Bankers Association. I enjoyed visiting

with Steve about the many new developments going on in Junction City and Fort Riley with the return of the Big Red One.

In the Office

Britt Gates of Anthony was in the office this week representing the Zoie Foundation to discuss child safety concerns with power windows in vehicles. Dan Senestraro of Johnson, David Meyer of Olathe and Alex Bachelor of Basehor were in with Kansas Dairy Farmers to talk about current issues in the dairy industry.

Kansans in my office this week for a tour of the U.S. Capitol included Dr. Robert Bassett of Hays and Lisa Hagans of Wichita with her mother, Dorothy Hagans, of Utica.

Very truly yours,

Jerry